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Paul Turner Sargent

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March 11 1932 letter to Sam

Paul Sargent

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March 11, 1932

Dear Sam,

Got your second letter today with the one dollar. I wondered if it was included in the other one as I did not find it.

We have had a week of winter down near zero nearly every night since a week ago with a sizzling polar express across the nation when it gets away from these woods. The wind has been steady from the north and northwest for about a week.

A letter from Pearl said last Saturday beginning of our winter spell they had a gale from the Southwest and a big rain at night. We had a snowstorm 3 inches and an awfully scorching freeze. This was the first snow covering the ground since the one in November. This is the coldest I remember for March. I have been figuring up 26 years ago yesterday we had a knee deep snow. You may remember a picture I took of you in the west woods. I know it was about 25 years ago or so and talked to Wallace about it and he remembered it was 26 years. How time hops along and what changes. The only constant thing in the world is change it seems.

Lad (Laddie) will be 12 years old next November. He was only a pup when I built studio in 1921. Lad is doing better now. Thought last fall and fall before he would not make the grade through the winter but he picks up each Spring. He is blind or nearly so, but goes out to the road, over to Bryan's, and around without losing himself. One night going along path in woods I watched him criss cross the path, feeling the path with his feet as I have done in the dark. Still some people are ignorant enough to think animals do not reason. I was down to Parkison's awhile back and saw Jack the first time since he took up his house there. He recognized me and cavorted around. Trix passed out yesterday. She quit eating and drinking two days ago.

I'm starting a picture I don't remember that I covered the canvas with a wash of red but it is a color that has to be put into the picture. I use red to draw in, as it is best to stay away from heavy darks and blues. Watch the blue, it seems to be the most difficult to control by students, as they all at first paint too cold. In painting a plain blue sky I put in warm colors first—pink, yellow (ochre) light blue green, etc. The blue last but not too

dark and be sure to let some of the other colors show also, but when looked at right distance, effect will be a blue sky, but a blue sky with life in it because the colors vibrate. There are three main planes in a landscape-sky, trees (or bldgs.) and the land. In mountains they are like the upturned plane of trees. Paint each one of these planes with broken colors, use sky color all through landscape so that whole will hang together under the same sky. The predominating color of a landscape is some kind of gray, a warm gray. You see the prevailing gray in the distances as it is seen through deeper layers of atmosphere, as the landscape recedes use more and more of this milkiness in the color.

Those paint strips should not cost more than 50 cents in an army supply store. They are three inches wider in centre and taper to each end where there is a hook to adjust length and another hook to connect with box. You might get them cheaper but would cost about \$1 to have one made.

When you get a few sketches made and dry, you can send them to me and I will criticize them.

Use strap to carry box and when painting adjust strap for around waist to hold box at proper distance on knees. I could not buy here the rings for attaching strap to box, so you will need to get some. They are like this and put on ends of box, or on top.

Held in with screws.

You should look in your library and see what they have in books about painting pictures. The latest book is "Elementary Principles of Landscape Painting" by John Carlson—the best. Look up those treating of actual painting methods and devour all of them, read over and over.

I haven't done much painting lately, a few portrait sketches. Made a fire place screen for Palmer's wife. Haven't had since last summer all the paint and canvas I would like to use. I use old canvases by cleaning with paint remover. You need this stuff to keep your brushes clean, unless you keep a coal oil can handy and always put them in it.

I have been hoping for a sale of some consequence. I had a large snow picture (with figures with wood house) last year in an

exhibit at Marshall Field's and the picture is still being exhibited. The sales lady wrote me last fall saying some people were interested in it in Ft. Wayne, but no sale yet. I would get \$367.00 if it sold. The Hoosier Assoc. have kept my snow pictures I sent this year also. The sales lady said she wished to include my first snow picture in the Hoosier show at the World's fair next year. I have been urged to send it to New York to the Academy show and may do it. The artists say it is my best and I had a lot of praise on it last year.

If I could put things back to 1920 with what I know now, I would do differently. I should have borrowed several hundred dollars then and gone abroad or to Alaska, and I could have paid it back I know. But I can't borrow now and could not sell pictures if I had them, so the time is passed. I thought I would improve and would be easier in future to get money, but not so. Hindsight is better than foresight.

I saw reproductions in magazine of murals done by Dean Cornwell in Las Angeles public library. If you see them notice (in two I saw) darks and lights up large areas of locomotive. Darks